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FM AMEMBASSY BANJUL

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6452

INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE

RUCNISL/ISLAMIC COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS BANJUL 000137

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KISL](#) [KPAO](#) [XF](#) [GA](#)

SUBJECT: THE GAMBIA: CHRISTIAN COUNCIL ADDRESSES CARTOON  
CONTROVERSY

REF: A. BANJUL 75

[¶](#)B. BANJUL 69

[¶](#)C. BANJUL 65 (ALL NOTAL)

STATEMENT ON CARTOON CONTROVERSY

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[¶](#)11. (U) The Gambia Christian Council (GCC), representing the various churches serving The Gambia's tiny Christian community, has issued a statement in reaction to the controversy generated by the recent publication of cartoons of the Prophet Mohamed in a Danish newspaper. As reported by the local media March 3, in its "Letter of Solidarity and Support" directed at the country's Muslim majority, the GCC expressed its "sympathy" to the world's Muslims over the "stress" caused them by the cartoons. Alluding to violent reactions to the cartoons elsewhere, the GCC said, "we are thankful that what has happened in other countries is not happening here." The GCC concluded with an appeal for adherents of all faiths to "respect the beliefs and traditions of each other."

COMMENT

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[¶](#)12. (SBU) The GCC's statement is indicative of the harmony prevailing among members of all faiths in this predominantly Muslim country, where, in addition to Christians, there are animists and Bahais. As previously reported (reftels), reaction in The Gambia to the cartoon controversy has heretofore been peaceful and low-key, with no public protests, to our knowledge. Prior to the GCC's statement, the sole public pronouncement on the matter had come from the country's "Supreme Islamic Council," which denounced the cartoons' publication as "unacceptable and offensive to Muslims' beliefs" (ref b). We believe that any further reactions here will likewise be peaceful and not detract from the prevailing calm in the capital and elsewhere. END

COMMENT.

STAFFORD